MILITARY STRENGTH OF NATIONS.

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XV.

MILITARY STRENGTH OF NATIONS.

AN

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ASSOCIATION OF CITADEL GRADUATES,

AT THEIR MEETING

IN CHARLESTON, 24TH NOVEMBER, 1853.

BY

JOHNSON HAGOOD,

A GRADUATE.

CHARLESTON:

STEAM-POWER PRESS OF WALKER & JAMES,

No. 3 Broad-street.

1854.

.VX

CORRESPONDENCE.

Col. Johnson Hagood:

Sir:—At a meeting of the Association of Graduates of the Citadel Academy, held this afternoon, the following resolution was unanimously adopted, viz:—

"*Resolved*, That a Committee of three be appointed, to return the thanks of this Association to Col. Johnson Hagood, for the very excellent Address delivered by him this morning, and to request a copy of the same for publication."

In the discharge of our duty, permit us, Sir, to express our personal regards to you, and to hope that you will favor the Association by an acquiescence in its request.

We have the honor to be,
Sir, your obedient servants,

J. M. PELOT,
E. C. BAILEY,
W. S. BREWSTER, } *Committee.*

Mills House, Friday Evening.

Charleston, 26th Nov., 1853.

Messrs. Pelot and others, Committee:

Gentlemen:—Your note, conveying a request of the Association of Citadel Graduates, for a copy of the Address recently delivered before them, for publication, is received, and a copy herewith transmitted.

Be pleased to express to the Association my sense of the obliging manner in which the Address was received, and accept my thanks for the courtesy with which you have discharged your office.

Respectfully, JOHNSON HAGOOD.

ADDRESS.

It was said, in an address to his sovereign, by the profoundest thinker of his day—if not of all time—that "the just measure and estimate of the power of a state is a matter than the which, among civil affairs, there is nothing more liable to error, nor that error more subject to perilous consequence."* It is, therefore, with well founded diffidence, that I propose, in discharging the duty assigned me by the Graduates of the Citadel Academy, to enter upon a branch of this subject, and to offer a few considerations upon some of the more prominent political and social causes which affect the military strength of nations.

Among these causes must be readily distinguished peculiarities of government which influence the energy and efficiency of the executive. The industrial pursuits which occupy the people, together with their financial resources, will constitute another element of the discussion; and the composition of the population will also claim a share of attention.

A perfect executive for military purposes, must fulfil the twofold conditions of effectiveness for operations in the field, and ability to popularize the war—to arouse the masses to their fullest contributions of men and money. Few, if any, of the governments with which we are acquainted, in ancient or modern times, have at once fulfilled both these conditions. General reasoning would assign to the self-centred, unshackled power of a despotism, the

* Bacon.

nearest approach to perfection in the first; and popular governments, the people themselves being the war-makers, would be held to excel in the latter. History establishes the correctness of these conclusions. The French people, during the wars of the Empire, exhibited much of voluntary exertion and endurance; yet how poor was then the enthusiasm among the great body of the nation, to the wild energy with which it engaged in the struggles of the Republic. Napoleon's unfettered genius was undoubtedly enabled to accomplish, with the given force, more than if he had been compelled to use the complicated machinery of a popular government. But, when at last he was beaten back by the host of enemies which his policy raised up, and the struggle was within the borders of France, for existence itself, then it was seen that all of French nationality which remained, was encompassed within the lines of his army. No Saragossa illustrated the annals of 1814; the patriotism of the people exhausted itself in the regular working of the conscription; and an autocrat, perhaps the ablest, as well as the most popular in history, was compelled to lay down his arms, we have high military authority in asserting, by the want of popular co-operation alone. The admirable strategy of the Emperor, Col. D'Aguilar asserts, had recovered the *morale* of the French army from the disasters of the previous campaign, and he had still at his command forces amply sufficient to re-establish the chances of war in his favor, when the political revolution that ensued upon the capture of Paris, compelled him to abdicate.

On the other hand, the wars of popular governments, though exhibiting gallant exertions of the people, have seldom shown a wise direction of their energies. It is a conceded fact, that the imbecility of the generals and armies opposed to the earlier and undisciplined hordes of revolutionary France, was all that saved the Republic from destruction; and when Napoleon seized upon the

government, though veteran and gallant troops were upon every frontier, yet from the inefficiency of the Directory, they were almost disorganized, and the integrity of France was seriously threatened. The history of the Peninsular war is a series of pictures of the abortions of the Spanish Cortes, while the people in that struggle elicited from Napier the high encomium that, "with wonderful constancy they suffered for their cause, notwithstanding the vices and folly of their Juntas rendered their efforts for the most part nugatory." The constancy and extent of Great Britain's exertions in the league against Napoleon, making her the sustaining spirit of the alliance, was due to the popular element in her government. The hearts of her people were in the cause. Yet the absence of sustained, vigorous and decisive action on her part, undoubtedly protracted the struggle, and must be attributed to her free institutions. The warmth with which every measure of the government was attacked by the opposition of the day, kept half the exertions of the ministry employed in self-defence; and the necessity of conciliating a popular council, of reconciling jarring interests in the appointment of offices, and of rendering an account to political antagonists, often fatally crippled their projected operations.

Our own revolutionary struggle, under the conduct of the first federation, exhibited, in strong relief, the strength and weakness of a popular government in war. It may well admit of doubt, whether any but republican troops could have withstood the disastrous retreat through the Jerseys, and, immediately following it, under circumstances which would have rendered the armies of a despotism a spiritless mob, have retained organization enough to strike the blow at Trenton. None, too, but a popular war, could have given to history the names of those partisan chieftains, whose chivalrous achievements throw so much of romance over the struggle at the South. These fea-

tures of the war the American dwells upon with delight, but he cannot avert his gaze from that other feature, which forms the subject of almost every contemporaneous writing of Washington—I allude to the inefficiency of the federation for the conduct of the contest. "Unless," said he, in 1780, in a letter to a member of the Continental Congress, "unless the States act with more energy than they have hitherto done, our cause is lost. By ill-timing the adoption of measures, by delays in the execution of them, or by unwarrantable jealousies, we incur enormous expenses, and derive no benefit from them." "And while such a system continues," he adds, "we never shall be able to apply our strength or resources to any advantage."* Indeed there can scarcely be a doubt upon the mind of the student of that war, that had the direction of affairs been in the hands of a vigorous central government, three years would have sufficed for the struggle, hampered as the mother country was by the alliances against her, and divided by public opinion at home. It has been stated, on the authority of the elder Adams, that the troops operating against the colonies at no time exceeded twenty-five thousand.† The nominal muster roll of the American, army at its highest number, exceeded eighty-nine thousand men ;‡ possessing, in a high degree, from the necessities of their pioneer state, many of the attributes of the soldier; animated with that spirit of devotion to their cause, which must ever mark a rebel army, and among whom was to be found no little of military experience, acquired in the preceding French and Indian wars. It will hardly be contended that the handful of British troops employed against us could have maintained themselves for nearly eight years before such an army, had it been properly organized and directed. Nor would the resources of the country have been inade-

* Sparks. † South-Carolina in the Revolution. ‡ De Bow.

quate to their efficient and active employment. We have the authority of Washington for the opinion, that under a proper organization, it could have been done at a less *annual* cost to the country than the system actually adopted.*

These illustrations may be deemed sufficient to establish the correctness of the position assumed, that it is neither in despotism, nor in popular government, that is to be found the form of executive which conduces most to the martial strength of a nation. Nor yet is it to be found in those mixed governments which have endeavored to establish an accurately defined mean between the two. From the very nature of the excellencies attributed to each, it must be evident that as a system verges permanently towards either, it must lose the virtue of the type it leaves in the same proportion as it acquires that of the type it approaches. The combination can only be made in a government which oscillates from one extreme to the other—popular for pacific purposes, or even in the inception of war—despotic for the conduct of hostilities. Incidental causes may affect the history of particular wars. A popular sovereign, religious fanaticism, national hatred, a martial people, may lend to an executive, at times, attributes foreign to its nature. But to that which possesses the constitution indicated, must be given the most uniform success. Accordingly, in the Roman Commonwealth, which ran the longest and steadiest career of recorded victory, we find a degree of liberty in the subject often degenerating into licentiousness, while the executive familiarly rose into temporary despotism in crises of danger. Each citizen, from the share which he in general had in the management of affairs of state, felt himself an integral portion of the republic—that her triumphs were his triumphs—and, for the sake

* Sparks.

of these, he at times bowed with oriental submission to the authority of Consul, and Decemvir, and Dictator.

Such a system is not ours. Our constitution accurately defines the powers of each department of the government; and, established to secure the blessings of liberty rather than for purposes of war, it provides for no such concentration of power in the executive. We belong to that class of mixed governments, which, seeking an accurately defined mean between a concentrated and ultra-democratic system, retain the virtues and the vices of both in military affairs. The late war with Mexico afforded evidence of the extent to which we retain the cardinal virtue of free governments—the popularization of war. Sixty-five thousand volunteers,* comprising in their ranks much of the talent, the wealth and refinement of the country, exchanging, at the call of government, ease and comfort for the hardships of bivouac and battle-field, is a spectacle of national enthusiasm which has been rarely equalled in history. Again, after the first gun was fired, any thing deserving the name of an anti-war party ceased to exist throughout the length and breadth of the land. But it must be remembered that this was eminently a popular war. From the acquisition of Texas, in which it originated, to the commencement of hostilities, it was the work of the people; and the first official notice taken of it by the government was, "that it existed." Its effects, too, upon the industrial pursuits of the nation were scarcely appreciable, while it gratified the acquisitiveness and spirit of adventure of the people. Our wars have not always exhibited the same spectacle of popular co-operation. In 1812, when a portion of the Union possessed interests, which, in its estimation, were not subserved by the war, the declaration of hostilities was followed by the Hartford Convention, and the refusal of

* De Bow.

more than one State to call out its militia. On the other hand, in the defective state of preparation in which hostilities found the government in 1846, is to be seen much of democratic improvidence. The Mexican government had formally notified the authorities at Washington, as far back as 1843, that the annexation of Texas would be considered an act of war ; and, in accordance with this previous notification, the Mexican minister had demanded and obtained his passports upon the passage of the joint resolution. Under these circumstances, not a dollar was asked for or granted by Congress, and not a company of soldiers added to our peace establishment. With a stronger foe, such improvidence might have opened the campaign with the disasters of Detroit and the river Raisin, instead of the brilliant achievements of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. To the party spirit incident to a free government, must be attributed, too, the jealousies which manifested themselves between the admistration and its generals. It cannot be doubted that the want of confidence between the Cabinet and Scott, crippled, to a considerable extent, the operations of the army against the capital ; and, coincident with the mention of Taylor's name, as the opposition candidate for the Presidency, with a sequence that looked like cause and effect, he was condemned to inaction upon his hitherto brilliant line of operations, and by the withdrawal of his veterans, exposed to chances of destruction, from which Buena Vista, the most desperate and best fought battle in American history, alone saved him. Again—the want of secrecy and celerity, conspicuous in all our operations, the failure to reap the legitimate fruits of a single victory, have been remarked by able commentators upon the war,* and must be attributed chiefly to our institutions. The advance on Monterey, the expedition against Vera Cruz,

* Southern Quarterly Review, and Stevens' Campaigns in Mexico.

were known and discussed in all their bearings in this country, and even in Mexico, for months before they were executed. From the fact that there was no place in our system for a war of conquest, (and such this became, whatever it may have been in its inception,) after every heavy blow there was a pause, which, though intended to facilitate a peace, had the only effect of giving the enemy time to recover from the shock. And we exhibited the anomalous spectacle of an invading army, whose greatest fear was that of disorganizing the enemy's government.

Such was the Mexican war, the best conducted of our history, and one in which it is our boast that we suffered not a single check. It may be worthy of consideration, how much of this success we owed to the weakness of our foe and the military genius of our people, and how much to the adaptability of our political system for war. It is true that time enough has, as yet, not been given to the working of the federal government to demonstrate its military properties. Its wars have certainly exhibited a progressive improvement in their conduct; and it may be in the gradual concentration of power, which many attribute to the system, that a high degree of military efficiency may be attained; but it may be, too, that from this acme of governmental energy, posterity will date the period of national decline. From that deference to custom and precedent, which, an heir-loom of our Saxon birth, marks the genius of our people, the change, if effected, will be by accomplishing a fixed alteration of our system; and if the principles we have adduced be correct, it will be the assumption of our military virtue at the expense of another.

There is a feature, however, in our institutions, peculiar to them among the governments of the day, which assumes an important position in an estimate of military strength, and which demands a somewhat extended no-

tice. I allude to that jealousy of the executive which has placed the reliance of the country to so great an extent upon militia.* Republican antipathy to standing armies revived upon the Western Continent this class of troops, at a time when, under the influence of advancing civilization, it had grown well nigh obsolete throughout the civilized world. The habits of the people at the time, formed by their frequent conflicts with the aborigines, their rural occupations affording the necessary leisure, and their economical spirit revolting at the expense of permanent forces, contributed to fasten a militia upon the policies of the country, to the almost exclusion of standing armies. At the present day the security of our geographical position, and the advance of arts and commerce, have materially modified the habits and occupations of our people; and the institution, in many sections of the country, is rapidly passing into a dead letter upon the Statute Book. The first men of the country (civil as well as military) have had their attention attracted by the fact, and have pressed for some remedy upon the Legislature. But, whether from the genius of the people being opposed to it—from a conviction of its inutility—or some other cause, their efforts have signally failed; and it may be assumed, for the purposes of our discussion, that the present policy of our government will remain unchanged. That a small body of troops, composed almost exclusively of staff and artillery corps, will constitute our sole permanent force, and that the reliance of the country in martial affairs will be chiefly placed upon a militia, tolerably organized and disciplined in some sections, and merely nominally organized, and entirely without discipline, in others; the soldier himself

* The federal feature is equally distinctive, but the framers of our constitution seem to have ignored it in almost every part that looks to war. Hence, perhaps, the political phenomenon of increased centripetal action in the government, which has been observed at the close of each of our principal wars.

deteriorating, according to circumstances, which will be hereafter considered. Militias are no new invention, and a glance at their history will enable us to form an opinion of their value. They were the only forces of nations in earlier times, and it is not until the time of Philip of Macedon that we have any account of a standing army. His frequent wars, and his practice of not disbanding his veterans at their close, reduced his levies to the consistency of a standing army. The fall of Greece and Persia, defended by militia, was the consequence. In the second Punic war, the Roman militia first encountered a standing army, and the severe lesson of Cannæ taught them its value. Previously, their troops were enlisted annually; but from that time, until the last days of their history, their troops were essentially permanent. Then, when, from the policy introduced by the emperors of dividing the army into small permanent cantonments in time of peace, and encouraging civil occupations among them, their armies had become militia, they were overthrown by the more vigorous militia of the barbarians.

If the difference was so marked in ancient times, it is much greater in modern. Then the value of an army depended much more upon the individual courage of its soldiers, their physical strength, and acquaintance with the use of arms; and, from the spirit of ancient civilization, its gymnasiums and public games, the body of the people could be much better trained in the discipline of the day than it is now possible. The employment, by the arts and manufactures, of so large a portion of modern communities, in pursuits utterly at variance with soldierly qualifications, have greatly depreciated the *personnel* of modern militias: and the advance of the art of war has raised it to the importance of a profession. With the emergence, therefore, of Europe from the dark ages, Charles the Seventh's "companies of ordonnance" made their appearance, and the military establishments of

modern Europe had their rise. Militia have now, save in rare and partial instances, disappeared from the field of battle. Nations no longer make war in proper person, but each pits its army against the other, and stakes its fortunes upon the fray. Experience has shown that economy and humanity, and, for purposes of ordinary wars, military strength, are consulted by it. But experience, too, has shown that when arms have been made too much a distinct profession, the strength of the State has been gradually undermined; the martial spirit of the people has been gradually contracted to the compass of its army, and none of its citizens, under any circumstances, dream of taking arms, save those who are bred to the profession. None but standing armies can resist standing armies. Militia, while remaining such, never yet have done it permanently; and, in the few recorded instances in which they have temporarily succeeded, it has been under great advantages of circumstance or position. But when the regular forces of a country are destroyed, without a militia from which to draft recruits, and whose efforts may gain time to re-organize defence, it is at the mercy of the foe. It is, therefore, only as a local police, as an aid to guerilla efforts, and as an organization to facilitate the raising of troops, and, at the same time, keep alive the martial spirit of the people, that a militia is valuable. Circumstances would indicate that these views will, hereafter, govern the military policy of this country. The frequent and signal failures of our militia in the revolution and the war of 1812, combining with the difficulty of employing them in a foreign country, produced in the campaigns against Mexico a system of volunteers for the war, and the result fully justified its adoption. Drawn from a better class of the community than that which furnishes the private soldier to permanent establishments, no better description of troops may be found than these, when time has been given them to acquire something of

discipline. It must be evident, however, that opposed to veterans in the beginning of their service, they will retain much of the inefficiency of militia, and this may be expected to mark their future employment. In the Mexican war it was not conspicuous, for the armies of the enemy were in almost an equal proportion composed of recruits; and, in those battles where volunteers were used, the regiments to which they belonged had been, for the most part, subjected for months previous to severe drill and discipline. It would be interesting in this connection to analyze the conflicts of that war, but our limits forbid, and we pass on to the next head of the discussion.

Financial resources, and the nature of the industrial pursuits which occupy the people.

In the consideration of this division of our subject, a marked difference is observable between ancient and modern war, taking the introduction of gunpowder as the era which divides them. The martial spirit so sedulously fostered in ancient States, the idleness produced by their barbarous disdain of the arts, and the preponderance, as already observed, given in ancient tactics to the *personnel* of armies, filled every community with multitudes at once ready and qualified to take the field. The order, regularity and mechanical precision, which assumes so high a position in the modern drill, and is only the result of long and patient training in masses, was then a matter of less moment. Hence peace establishments were, to a great extent, unknown. Again, the simple nature of their artillery and munitions of war required little time or skill for preparation, and it may be safely assumed that, save for the construction of fortifications, there was little need for the item of military expenditures in the peace budget of an ancient State. When war was declared, the maxim of making war support war supplied the commissariat, and plunder was a large part of the soldier's

pay. It was not until after the siege of Veii that the Roman soldier received any pay at all, and even then it was reduced to a nicely calculated minimum of subsistence. Under the Emperors, money was nearly as plentiful in the Roman Empire as among civilized nations of the present time,* and the pay of an infantry soldier was but about sixteen cents a day, from which he supplied himself with his own arms, tent and clothing. Thus the legionaries which upheld that vast fabric were supported at an annual expense of £2,500,000, an amount less by half than what the British public are said to pay for the navy which they now have afloat. Unless, therefore, an ancient State was the subject of invasion, hostilities added well nigh nothing to its expenditures. Hence poverty and sterility became almost a military virtue. In supplying a hardy and vigorous breed of men, they furnished the material of offensive war, and they repelled an invading host by starvation. Accordingly, the history of ancient conquest is ever the fall of wealth before its lean and hungry neighbor. The Persians, a hardy mountain race, subdued and ruled the wealthier Medes, until enervate, under the influence of the wealth they had acquired, they themselves became the victims of Macedon. Carthage fell before Rome. And when Rome had diverted into her exchequer the revenues of half the world, she too had to bow her proud head in the dust, and became the spoil of the Vandal and the Goth. These characteristics of war pervade every page of ancient history, and extend down to near our own times. The feudal soldier warred, not at his sovereign's, but at his own expense; and the daily avocations of his rural life, and his favorite amusements of hawk and hound, and tilt and tournament, were all the preparation he would receive. The same relation of a nation's wealth to its strength are still ob-

* Hume's Essays—Commerce.

served. England, comparatively wealthy, fell before the Norman, while the poverty-stricken countries of Scotland and Wales preserved their independence for centuries. But the introduction of gunpowder, and the revolution it has occasioned in the art of war, has altered this state of things. Arsenals, and foundries, and bastioned forts, and peace establishments, swell the expense of preparation; and when engaged in the actual operations of a campaign, the greater leniency of the laws of war throw the maintenance of an army almost entirely upon its own State, while the comforts and accommodations necessitated by habits of modern life, add to the expense of its support. Thus we find the vast revenues which advanced civilization has enabled the governments of the present day to raise, expended chiefly in preparation for, or in the operations of, war. The Russian military establishment in time of peace consumes more than two-thirds of the general revenue, the English and French more than one-third, and the Prussians more than one half.*

Wealth, therefore, from constituting rather a point of weakness in a State, has become an element of strength. Let us inquire what relation it bears to the other elements we have enumerated. The high position it occupies is abundantly illustrated in the currency of the maxim that "money is the sinews of war." Yet Machiavel, in view of the wealth and effeminacy of the Italian Republic of his day, dependent for defence upon mercenaries, who had reduced war to a bloodless tournament, declared that there were no other sinews of war than the sinews and muscles of men's arms. And Lord Bacon has said, that "the blessings of Judah and Isacher her will never meet; that the same nation should be at once the lion's whelp and the ass between burthens." These views Napoleon—than whom there can be no higher authority—has endorsed in

* Halleck—Art and Science of War.

his maxim, "that poverty and hardship are the best school for the soldier." We have seen that, without wealth, nations are utterly incompetent to the operations of modern war. The irruption of the savage is the utmost to which their martial efforts may attain. It must, therefore, be the effects of wealth, when attained upon the individual character of its citizens, or in the habits engendered by the occupations in which it is sought, that the objections to it lie. The ill effects of the first are found in the tendency of wealth, in civilized communities, ever to concentrate among the few; thus rendering it less available for national purposes, and engendering in the possessors of overgrown fortunes, luxury and effeminacy. These effects must be confined primarily to a class, and necessarily the smallest in the community, since the appliances of luxury must be as deficient in a community where all are equally rich, as where all are equally poor. The rich are ever, however, the most considerable class in a community. In them is mediately or immediately the control of public affairs; their example exerts a powerful influence, and their command of the means of subsistence enables them to pervert the pursuits of the poor to the purposes of a luxurious civilization. Thus may the canker extend throughout the body politic, and the strength of the State be affected in the general corruption of its citizens. This train of effects is observable in history; but, we are persuaded, nowhere as the necessary result of the cause indicated. In the decline of those nations whose extinction has been attributed to this cause, sumptuary laws and canons of inheritance—scattering estates as broadcast as our own, and necessarily immersing, at least, every third generation in the bracing waters of poverty—have failed to check the downward progress. On the other hand, in a modern State, whose policy has jealously retained the whole of its landed property in a class, we behold an aristocracy which can com-

pare favorably with any body of men the world has seen. There are families among them, which, for centuries, have been in possession of princely wealth—and yet scarcely a generation has passed in which their names have not, in the cabinet or in the field, been commingled with their country's glory. The truth seems to be, that when the various and subtle causes which determine a nation's decadence are in operation, the increase of riches may, and probably does, accelerate the catastrophe. But when a nation's star is in the ascendant, increasing wealth, modified in its effects by countervailing causes, adds new leverage to public spirit and progress. Be this as it may, however, as to wealth already attained, in the character of the occupations by which wealth is sought, we behold proximate and undoubted causes of a nation's strength or weakness.

The industrial pursuits of a nation, for our purposes, may be considered under the general head of manufactures, commerce and agriculture. The political economist may settle the proportion in which these respectively swell the wealth of a State, and the necessary relations which they bear to each other. It is within the purview of our subject, simply to examine them as pursuits moulding the national character in reference to war. In this point of view, we hesitate not to rate their importance in the inverse order in which they are named. A celebrated writer, however, has given to manufactures a higher position.* Deeming the strength of a State to consist in the number of persons it has engaged in labor, of a kind from which they may be easily diverted to the public service, he divides the bulk of the community into husbandmen and manufacturers; the first providing the necessaries of life, the latter administering to the artificial wants of society. The greater the number of manu-

* Hume.

factures, the greater demand for the means of subsistence, which increased skill and assiduity in agriculture will be enabled to supply; and thus, while the population is rapidly increased, a vast supply of labor is laid up, which, upon emergencies, may be drawn to the service of the State by trenching merely upon the production of the superfluities of life. Such is an abstract of his argument; yet we must be excused for thinking but lightly of an army recruited in the purlieus of a Manchester or a Glasgow;—from a population whose average of existence is little more than the period of legal majority;—whose physical energies have never been taxed beyond recruiting the broken threads of a spinning-jenny; and whose enterprise in the division of labor has met with no wider field of employment than perhaps the life-long manufacture of pin-heads. Undoubtedly, the state of the case is different, in reference to those arts and manufactures which require rather the arm than the finger; but in the improvements of modern machinery, the circles of these is greatly narrowed, nor are they included, generally, in the sense of the word manufactures. A country is not emerged from barbarism, that is destitute of its masons, its smith and its carpenters; nor does the possession of them entitle it to rank among manufacturing communities.

Commerce rises much higher in the scale of pursuits we have enumerated. A gainful maritime commerce is essential to the possession of a navy, that potent engine of modern war. The same skill which constructs and navigates the merchant ship in peace, suffices for the man-of-war; and the shock of battle adds but little to the perils of the hardy mariners' daily experience. The argument we have noticed, in support of manufactures, applies in full force to this branch of commerce. An extensive merchant marine stores up not only a quantity of labor which the State may safely use in war, but of the

very kind that is needed for a portion of its military force; and that portion of this labor, too, which, thrown by hostilities from its regular pursuits, is not absorbed by the State, finds employment in privateering; which, perhaps, is more efficacious in cutting up the resources of the enemy than the regular efforts of the State. So, too, in the operations of an inland commerce, there is little to be discovered which may sap the breed of men. The transportation of goods is not dissimilar to the logistics of an army; and the vending of them, though obnoxious as a pursuit to the same objections as manufactures, is far from being so to the same extent. Yet, until lately, the pursuit of commerce has ever been deemed hurtful to a nation's strength. Ancient politics held every thing connected with the shop and the counter as mean and contemptible; and commerce, as well as manufactures, was an affair of slaves and freedmen. These pursuits were held, too, far down into the period embraced in modern history, as occupations inconsistent with the character of gentleman or soldier. It must be confessed, there is little in the calculating spirit of gain, which ignores alike passion and sentiment, and compasses its ends by inflexible attention to profit and loss—there is little in this spirit in harmony with the enthusiastic daring of a soldier, his recklessness of consequences, his devotion to a sentiment, to an intangible good—honor. But man is of varied impulses. A thousand motives blend in one result; and the intention with which an act is done, determines its effect upon his own moral constitution. Let a man covertly smite his personal enemy, and ever afterwards his arm is palsied for good by the crushing sense of a meanness and a crime. The same man deludes his country's enemies into an ambushed pass; and from the security of mountain heights slaughters not one, but scores. He walks forth a hero, not only in his fellows, but in his own estimation, capable of loftier deeds, a more

devoted abnegation of self, than before. Thus an energetic and ambitious race may embark in the pursuits of gain, nay, become proficient in its arts; and, yet, looking upon wealth as a means to progress, not as a good in itself, or a termination of toil, escape much of the contamination it is supposed to possess. And such do we believe to be, to a great extent, the case with ourselves. A restless and energetic race, among whom democratic institutions, while breaking down all barriers to individual progress, have left but two roads to distinction—mind and money—and these two oftenest running into each other—we engage in the pursuits of commerce with a zeal which, containing but small alloy of sordidness, leaves room for much of the spirit that animates the soldier. A fair proportion of our military worthies have been bred at the counter,* and in every war that we have waged, a full proportion of our mercantile classes have been found in the ranks.

It is, however, to agriculture—man's first and best employment—that we must look as the pursuit which moulds the soldier. Its implements are the tools of the engineer; its motive agencies and appliances are identical with the artillerists and the commissaries; its companion, the generous steed, "who mocketh at fear, and turneth not back from the sword." Its concomitants are the strong arm and vigorous limb, and simple habits which the soldier needs. Its recreations are oftenest the "mimicry of noble war." And the husbandman's patriotism is not sickened in the confined atmosphere of factories, or wafted about with every bale of merchandize that floats; but, rooted to the soil, and nourished in the free air of heaven, it strikes deep, and spreads wide, a vigorous

* The most brilliant military achievement of our colonial history, the reduction of Louisburgh, often called the Dunkirk of America, was under the lead of William Pepperell, a New-England merchant. He was knighted for it, and a regiment given him in the regular service of Britain.

growth. Philosophers have ever given this pre-eminence to agriculture; and not only has the fact been indicated, that it has been always the predominant pursuit of warlike States, but a recent writer has gone so far as to assert that history furnishes no example of even a successful army drafted from any but an agricultural people.* It is a thrice told tale, that Roman dominion fell with the decline of rural life, whatever may have been the causes which brought that about. Athens was the only commercial community among the prominent Grecian States, yet agriculture received great attention among them; they even claimed the honor of having introduced it into Greece. Their commercial character was taken on after the second Persian war, when the State had already laid the foundations of its greatness. It was never in fuller development than at the commencement of the Pelloponesian war, and when that struggle ended Athens was prostrate before her agricultural foes. In modern times England has risen highest in the commercial scale; and lays claim, with some merit, to an equal position in arms. But if we analyze her military history, we will find her no exception to the general rule. An insular position has generally protected her from invasion, and transferred the war to the territories of her enemies; a state of affairs in which levies, *en masse*, are never required. She has thus with safety been enabled to permit a large portion of her population to become non-combatants, provided they bring wealth into the treasury; and it has been sufficient to retain simply a class for purposes of war. This class, no one acquainted with her history, need be told, are her agriculturists. Her officers are drawn almost exclusively from her aristocracy, the landed proprietors of the realm; her soldiers from the agricultural peasantry of Scotland, Ireland, and her own farming dis-

* Monarchy of the Middle Classes.

tricts. Again, millions of debt attest the extent to which she has, since the period of her extensive commercial character, carried the mercenary system. As in Rome, under the emperors, she has subsidized whole nations to fight her battles;—nay, in further likeness of imperial Rome,—gorgeous and glittering to the view, but with the canker at her core,—mercenaries have crept into the ranks of her own legions. These, and in no inconsiderable proportion, have entered into the composition of every army she has sent into the field for a century past. Even in the Peninsular war, in which she kept together by far the largest army for many years, there were brigades of German mercenaries. We deem Blenheim and Malplaquet, and Oudenarde and Waterloo, British triumphs, and truly, since British gold and British diplomacy held together, and British skill for the most part directed, the armies by which they were retained. Yet in estimating them as evidences of her military strength, we must not forget that in each the number of British men engaged was not one-fourth of the forces employed.* When William of Orange landed at Torbay, he was favored, it is true, by a powerful party among the aristocracy, but the great mass of the people had no sympathy with his cause, and a king, in whose veins flowed the blood of both Alfred and the Norman, was upon the throne to direct their energies. No Hastings marked the usurper's march to London. When the heir of the Stuarts crossed the border in 1745, he entered among a people almost unanimously opposed to his cause; yet, with eight thou-

* At Blenheim, the allied force was forty-eight battalions and eighty-six squadrons; of which there were English, fourteen battalions and fourteen squadrons. Thus the British proportion was a little more than one-fifth of the allied force; and it remained about thus during the Marlborough campaigns in the low countries.—*Allison's Life of Marlborough.*

At Waterloo, the allied force, including those of Blucher's troops who came into action, was one hundred and forty-four thousand; of which there were British thirty-three thousand, or less than one-fourth.—*Allison's His. of Europe.*

sand undisciplined troops, he marched to within sixty miles of London, where indecision of councils, not a hostile array, arrested his progress. His audacity remained unchastised until regular regiments could be recalled from the continent. Should the experiment again be tried, and with one hundred thousand disciplined men, burning to wipe out in blood the memory of Cressy and Poictiers, and Ramilies and Waterloo, England may in bitterness learn the truth of her great philosopher's teaching—that in stooping to become the ass between burdens, she has ceased to be the lion's whelp.

It becomes, too, the Southern States of this confederacy, standing as they now do, and are likely to continue, in a state of siege, in which nothing but the consciousness of their ability to defend themselves restrains an assault, to ponder well, should ever the alternative be presented, ere they exchange their time-honored agriculture for trade's proud but fleeting empire.

Having thus examined the two first causes indicated as affecting the military strength of nations, let us pass to the next, and last, which it was proposed to consider.

The composition of the population.

From our point of survey, unity is the fundamental requisite in the composition of a population. A unity, not alone of race and descent, since the junction of races in the Roman is a conspicuous feature in the history of that conqueror commonwealth; and all analogy proves, that by the judicious mingling of different bloods, man, the animal, must ever be improved. One race must be sufficiently predominant, or the fusion must be sufficiently complete, to produce a homogeniety of national character; and there the necessity of this union ends. But the unity of which we speak, is of the kind brought about by the social and political relations between the classes of the community; its result their capability of

harmonious and vigorous action towards a common end. The effect of the political relations existing between the classes of a community upon its martial power, have been, perhaps, already sufficiently indicated in considering those peculiarities of government affecting the efficiency of the executive. We propose here briefly to examine their social and economical relations; the connexion between capital and labor.

Where there is civilization there must be capital in the hands of the few, and labor must be hireling or servile. Which of these two modes of social organization places a State highest in the scale of military strength? The award is sometimes given to the first; let us examine the evils attributed to the latter. If slavery disturbs that essential unity in the composition of the population of which we have spoken, the result must be visible either in the non-combatancy of the slave, his disaffection to the State, or in the effect of slavery upon the free popu lation.

Slavery existed among the States of the ancient world to an extent unequalled in modern times, unless the serfs of Russia be classed as slaves. Mr. Hume estimates the population of Athens at two hundred and eighty-four thousand; of whom there were free, eighty-four thousand; aliens, forty thousand; and slaves, one hundred and sixty thousand. The aliens occupied a position in law analagous to our free negroes; the proportion of free to servile may be, therefore, stated as eighty-four to two hundred. The proportion of slaves to citizens was still greater in Sparta. And Gibbon estimates the number of slaves as at least equal to the free inhabitants of the Roman world. So large a proportion of the inhabitants of the State being slaves, and the number of freemen being frequently reduced in the destructive wars of antiquity, the employment of the former class in arms became a by no means unusual expedient. A Helot contingent was

constantly present with the Spartan forces; sometimes admitted to the honor of the Hoplitæ or heavy armed; and almost invariably, as light troops, forming a majority of the army. From her domestic slaves, too, Lacedemon frequently recruited her ranks; and that to so great an extent, that upon one occasion Agesilans marched upon an expedition with two thousand of these, and attended by but thirty citizens. Historians concur in the fact that these troops invariably behaved well, and in some instances, as in the Peloponesian war, with distinguished bravery. In Athens, and the other States of Greece, recruits were habitually drawn from the servile classes; and among the Dardanians, where it was not uncommon for a single individual to own a thousand slaves, they in peace cultivated the land, and in war filled the ranks of the army, their masters serving as officers. Among the Romans, from the greater number of freemen, recourse was not so often had to this source of supply. But more than once their broken ranks were recruited with slaves; and in one memorable instance, after the slaughter of Cannæ, the State purchased and embodied three thousand slaves, in preference to ransoming at a less expense the captives of that disastrous day. Disciplined by the veteran Sempronius, these troops at the siege of Cumæ justified the confidence of the commonwealth, repulsing Hannibal in a sally with the loss of near one thousand five hundred men. This hasty glance at the experience of the ancient world, demonstrates, beyond cavil, the practicability of a State's employing effectively its servile classes in arms. In Russia, where the disproportion between free and servile is greater, perhaps, than in any of the States of antiquity, being stated at six to forty,* the ranks of the army are filled entirely from her predial slaves; and the anxiety with which Europe lately hung,

* Prof. Duncan.

upon the decision of the Czar for war or peace, indicates the estimation in which her armies are held. But, with the slaveholding States of America, it is unlikely that at present, or for the future, it will be necessary to arm this portion of our population. In earlier days, when the proportion of freemen was less, it became necessary, and was effectively done. Upon the Statute Book of South-Carolina is an act, which, after reciting "that among the slaves of this colony are a great number who may be rendered serviceable for its defence and protection in case of actual invasion," provides that each captain of militia shall make a roll of slaves in his division, who shall be liable to military duty on occasions of emergency. And this, the act goes on to say, "that the assistance of our said trusty slaves may be made more certain and regular." Eleven years afterwards the confidence of the Legislature was vindicated, when the colony, with but twelve hundred freemen upon her muster roll, with the assistance of these "said trusty slaves," repulsed the six thousand ferocious Yemassees, whom Spanish enmity let loose upon her borders. At present, however, the proportion of slaves to freemen in the Southern States is as one to two; and from our six millions of citizens may be drawn an army, after deducting the necessary numbers for overseers and managers, larger than can be afforded by any other civilized nation in proportion to its inhabitants. Nor would our financial resources be unequal to its support. The productive interests of the country would suffer by the absence of no agricultural laborer; and, besides, an abundant production of the supplies of an army, we have been blessed by Providence, and our own good energy, with more than one staple, which is no less a world-wide tender than California gold.

If our slaves, therefore, fulfil the condition of obedient laborers, it is all we need require of them in an estimate of military strength. We turn to the consideration of

slavery in this aspect. The view we have already taken of the extensive and successful employment of slaves in arms, ought sufficiently to demonstrate their fidelity as a class in every period of their history. But the objection may be taken, that in the instances of their enlistment they ceased to be slaves, and passed into the class of freemen; and thus, that the fidelity manifested is not to be reckoned a virtue of the class from which they were drawn, but of that into which they entered. This change of *status* occurred in some of the instances we have adduced; but then, generally, as the reward of valor, not as a pre-existent condition.

For the most part, among the States whose employment of slaves has been alluded to, the disbanded slave returned to the service of his owner, or the recruit, as in Russia, merely passed from the service of a private to a public master. Let us, however, examine the fidelity of the slave laborer, from whom is required a mere passive loyalty. And, in prosecuting the inquiry, the moral inertia of the slave, and the ability of the master to keep him in check, must necessarily be blended with that fidelity which springs from attachment to the master. Again, we draw our most instructive lessons from the annals of the ancient world. Perhaps a severer system of slavery has never been seen than that which governed the Helots of Sparta. The earliest accounts of this subject people represent them as inhabitants of a tributary town, which, failing to pay its tribute, the Spartans reduced to ashes, and dispersing its inhabitants throughout their territory, compelled them to till the ground for the conquerors. They were considered as belonging to the State, but were, to a certain extent, portioned out among individual citizens. The Spartans never personally cultivated their estates throughout the country, but upon them was placed these Helots, and half the produce went to the Spartan proprietor, while the other half was allotted to the la-

borer. Very little intercourse took place between the conquerors and the conquered; no softening down in the daily avocations of domestic life of the first enmity of either people. Hence, acting on the suspicious and vindictive Spartan mind, the cruel laws in relation to them. Hence the fact related by historians, that they were constantly treated as the enemies of the State; that the Ephori annually declared war upon them; and that by the institution of the Cryptea, the first war path of the Spartan youth was always against this unhappy people. Could a system be imagined more calculated to breed hatred in the minds of the subject race; more calculated to render them a smouldering fire within the bowels of the State, ever ready to seize upon its vitals. Cruelty, rapacity, absenteeism, at once acting upon the minds of a brave and savage people, acquainted with their own numbers, and that portion, at least, which was enrolled in the armies of the State, acquainted with arms; yet the Helots were always kept in subjection. Though historians loosely speak of frequent insurrections, but one was of sufficient importance to be recorded in authentic detail; and that was when Sparta, already weakened in the struggles of an existing war, was overthrown by an earthquake, and the Helots deeming it a judgment of the gods, fell upon their oppressors as they were escaping from their tottering houses. Even this insurrection was repressed. If we seek the cause of this apparently anomalous submission of the subject race—this ability of their masters to keep them in check—the answer is found in that universal tendency of the human mind caught by our great dramatist, when he makes Hamlet say that men more readily "bear the ills they have than fly to those they wot not of." It is found in the ability of a police, contemptible in numbers, but organized, to keep the gouty lordling in safety in his palace, while bleareyed want stands with a half drawn dagger at its por-

tals. It was witnessed when, a few years ago, the standing armies of Europe held back, with mailed hand, the masses struggling for political privilege. This is a harsh view of the subject, but it sufficiently illustrates the futility of indulgence in visions of slave insubordination.

We cannot, however, judge of an institution by an instance of its unparalleled abuse. No such causes of antagonism between slave and master existed in the other States of Greece. Their slaves were domestic or slaves proper; owned by a single master, and for the most part bred in his household, or purchased with his money. The relation, therefore, assumed a milder aspect. In Athens, where the disproportion between the free and servile was so great, no insurrection, or suspicion of an insurrection, amid all the mutations of her fortunes, is mentioned in history, except one commotion of the miners. Slavery at Rome, in some of its phases, assumed much of Spartan severity. The insurrection of Spartacus is the only one in Italy that deserves the name, though Rome had been in existence six hundred and eighty years when it occurred, and at least as long a time elapsed before the last of her Cæsars vacated the throne of the West. This outbreak had its origin in the barbarisms of the arena. Two hundred gladiators, captive Gauls, Germans and Thracians, rose in revolt at Capua. Liberating others, and intoxicated with their first successes, they turned a deaf ear to the counsel of their leader to escape to their distant homes, and remained for defeat and death. The success of this wild attempt is attributable mainly to the character of Spartacus, a man whom Plutarch describes as being more of a Greek than a barbarian in the strength and dignity of his mind, and who had served in the Roman armies. The republic, too, was upon the wane. Large numbers of freemen, discontented with the rule of the military tyrants who had begun to obtain the control of affairs, joined the insurgents, and the revolt rose rather into the

dignity of a civil than a servile war. So, too, the servile war, which nineteen years before desolated Sicily, presents similar features; originating in excessive cruelty, and fostered for political purposes.

Such are the lessons of slave fidelity we draw from the fertile experience of the ancient world—from the annals of States analogous to ourselves in political institutions. Our own experience, however, is worthy of consideration. In the two centuries which have elapsed since the first slave was landed on the banks of James River, but three insurrections have broken out amongst us; the Southampton insurrection, led by a crazy negro preacher; one in South-Carolina, in 1740, when our slaves were half civilized savages, and exceeded the freemen three times in number; and one in Louisiana, mentioned by Professor Dew. So insignificant were these in extent, that the whole number of lives lost in their suppression exceeded not one hundred. Indeed, a consideration of the laws of human nature can lead to the anticipation of no other result from slavery, as a social organization, than a high degree of harmony between the only two classes which it admits in the community; a high degree of that unity which is the essential military requisite in the composition of a population. The feeling of loyalty—that attachment of man to man, bred in the relations of dependence and support, and which, second only to religion in its effect upon human action, at no distant period in the past sufficed for the government of the world—this feeling underlies and pervades the whole system. And it is only where the relation of employer and employed subsists between the same parties from infancy to old age; and where protection from want, in sickness, and from the strong armed oppressor, enters into the wages of labor; it is only, in short, where the institution of slavery exists, by whatever name it may be called, that the feeling of loyalty finds place for development. Free labor

"Wots not how a name, a word,
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord."

Its intercourse with its employer assumes the metallic nature and fixed extent of the medium by which it is regulated. Sympathy, and that which excites sympathy, forms no part of the consideration, and allegiance is, therefore, withheld; a harsh individualism resents as degrading any identification, except as per contract, with its wealthier neighbor and temporary master. It is a system adapted to a character in the laborer, intellectual, sturdy, provident and self-sustaining; but one radically defective in making no provision for that more numerous class, in whom sentiment and feeling make up all of character which they possess, and to whom dependence is a necessity of contented existence. These, as long as humanity retains its lineaments, must constitute a proportion in all grades of society; a proportion increased with every descent of the social scale, until at last it becomes the pervading characteristic of the only class from whom the slave ever has been, or ever can be, permanently drawn—the lowly and uneducated, the moral and mental molluscæ of Adam's family.

Negro slavery, among the Southern States of America, presents features which the institution has never worn before. The dominant race is one which, among its peers, has won pre-eminence in the sturdier traits of character; the subject people one, which in all its history—and their record goes back to the morning of time—has never shown itself more capable of standing alone than the creeper which embraces the oak. Yet, however, deficient in the bone and gristle of manhood, the negro exhibits in high development the kindlier feelings; is strong in attachment, and remarkable for innate devotional feeling—a sentiment which leads to awe and reverence of superiority, wherever that superiority is vested. Again, this being, such as he is described, is placed under a system

in relation to his stronger brother, which recognizes him not as a predial serf, a mere appendage of the land ; nor yet as a Helot vassal of the State, but rather as a subject of his individual master—the law of the land for him a *magna charta*—the tone of a christian public opinion his bill of rights. Mildly treated, reared up from infancy the humble companion of his master's family, and receiving upon his impressionable nature the imprint of theirs, whither his master goeth the Southern negro goes ; where his master lodgeth he lodges ; his master's people are his people ; his master's God his God ; and where his master dies, he dies and is buried. When the vindictive savage was upon our borders, ever ready to take up the hatchet for the extermination of the white, the negro never sided with him ; and in every Indian war of our history, negroes fought and died in the service of their masters. During the whole of our revolutionary struggle no insurrection was ever meditated by them, and but few deserted to the British, though flattered with the promise of freedom and military service. So, also, did they remain faithful in those sections of the country occupied by the enemy in the war of 1812. And such will they ever remain, while the circumstances with which they are surrounded remain as they are.

If slavery, therefore, weakens not a State by rendering a large class of its inhabitants non-combatant, nor yet by the necessary disloyalty of the slave, its injurious results, if such they are, must be found in its depreciating the martial character of the class of freemen. The pride of caste, the sense of personal superiority, the habit of command, an impatience of toil, or as it has been phrased, "the loving of danger better than travail," have been ever recognized as features of the warrior character ; and these are all eminently results of a system which provides a class for menial offices, and makes the loftier pursuits of life the birth-right of the freeman. But our

waning limits forbid us to discuss this branch of the subject, nor is it a topic upon which, as slave-holders, we desire to speak. We are content with the effects of a system upon ourselves, which Burke recognized as producing the highest development of the spirit of liberty, and which Bacon held essential to eminence in martial character. A system which was not inconsistent with the hardy virtues of Greece and Rome; which nourished the fires of feudal chivalry; which has rendered the name of Poland a synonyme for gallantry in battle, and indomitable resistance to oppression;—a system, I repeat, whose effects are thus emblazoned upon the history of the past, and which in our short experience has furnished so large a proportion of the soldiers of the republic, needs no defence at our hands. To those whom ignorance or fanaticism may dispose to consider it as detracting from military strength; to those who doubt the fidelity of our slaves, or depreciate the martial character of the slave-holder; with our hand upon the pages of history, we may well reply, in the language of the Highland henchman to his judges at Carlisle—"They know neither the heart of the loyal man, nor the spirit of the gentleman."

Gentlemen Graduates:—Your behests have been obeyed, and it but remains for me to apologize for the very imperfect manner in which, amid the press of other engagements, the duty has been performed. One word more, however, and I am done. To-day we have each met those with whom, though long separated, we once associated in a familiarity and constancy of intercourse equalled in few domestic circles. We have grasped the hands which last we wrung in parting beneath the old Citadel archway. We have felt how

> "Dear the school-boy spot
> We ne'er forget, tho' there we are forgot."

Embarking from the same haven upon the turbid waters of life, widely separated by its currents, to-day some of us have been brought together, notes of progress have been compared, and tidings had of the missing. There are few of us who have not learned that the skies retain not always their summer hue; none of us, thank God, have stranded. But our meeting has had a result. An annually recurring trysting time has been named; a rallying point established for the future graduate, and a medium instituted through which our efforts may avail for the welfare of our Alma Mater.

Let not the good work perish! Older schools than ours have found it impossible to keep up Alumni Associations, and ours will meet with peculiar difficulties; but the spirit of comradrie should mark most the graduates of a military school, and it is said that the child ever remembers its mother with the warmest affection, whose recollection embraces the period of her youthful beauty.